

## Elect another Kennedy?

DAVID SHAW

Now, the cynics say, it's up to Teddy.

Robert Kennedy's body wasn't even in the ground, and already they decided that just as Jack picked up for Joe, and Bobby picked up for Jack, so Teddy would now pick up for Bobby—as standard-bearer of the Kennedy family and, if he lives long enough, as President of the United States.

The cynics are wrong.

Family standard-bearer Teddy Kennedy will undoubtedly be. American President he will never be.

A harsh judgment, you say? Premature? Rash? Unfair? Unfeeling?

No. None of these.

Teddy Kennedy will never be President because the American people bear a collective burden of guilt and grief too crushing to ever be willingly borne again.

The American political arena has become a shooting gallery. The American people may be unable—or unwilling—to change the rules which govern that gallery, but they will refuse to set another Kennedy up as a target in the gallery.

To whatever extent it is possible for a nation of 200 million to share the grief of a single family, this nation has shared the grief of, first, Jackie and John-John and Caroline, and, now, of Ethel and her 10 children. They will reject even the possibility of subjecting Ted Kennedy's wife Joan and her three children to that grief.

They will insist on sparing the Kennedys—and themselves—yet another tragedy.

They will say this one, great, grieving family has suffered enough.

They will feel this great, grieving nation has suffered enough.

They will feel they—personally, directly, individually—have suffered enough.

No more, they will say. No more.

Gov. Reagan believes Kennedy died because "those in high places condone and even encourage wanton violation of the law."

Mayor Yorty believes Kennedy died because one man "under Communist influence" brought the tensions and prejudices and hatreds of "the far-off Mideast" to the mayor's fair city.

President Johnson believes, "Two hundred million Americans did not strike Robert Kennedy... It would be wrong to conclude from this act that our country is sick."

The mayor and the governor and the President are wrong. The assassination of Robert Kennedy was not just the act of one demented man; nor was it a by-product of increasingly liberal court decisions and government actions.

Robert Kennedy was murdered because you and I live in a world that measures progress by the number of people who can be killed by terrifying new weapons.

He was murdered because you and I live in a world in which the terms "overkill" and "kill ratio" have become so acceptable and human life so expendable that a general can be given a medal for "destroying a town in order to save it."

He was murdered because you and I haven't insisted our representatives in Sacramento and Washington approve stringent gun controls.

He was murdered because you and I pass stranded motorists without stopping.

He was murdered because you and I have closed our doors—and our ears—to women fleeing from rapists and to children fleeing from ghettos.

He was murdered because—contrary to what President Johnson says—ours is a sick society.

It is not one city with a climate of violence, not one man with a warped mind. John Kennedy was slain in Dallas, his brother in Los Angeles. Malcolm X was murdered in New York, Martin Luther King in Memphis, Richard Speck killed eight nurses in Chicago, Charles Whitman shot 44 men and women in Austin, Robert Benjamin Smith executed four women and a child in Mesa, Ariz.

Nor is violence always an individual act. Negroes have rioted in Watts and in Harlem, in Detroit and in Newark, in East St. Louis and Lincoln and Nashville and Cincinnati and Tampa.

These are not isolated instances. They are symptomatic of the sickness that has seized our society.

In a time when jet planes and automobiles have brought the citizens of the world closer together than ever before, the sheer size

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(Continued from page 19) and complexity of the world has driven them farther apart than ever before. And we have been unwilling to cope with these new Problems. We have pretended they don't exist.

We have become a nation—a world—of numbers, of walking

computer punchcards, of mechanized zombies, of faceless, soulless automatons. Some people are lost in the shuffle of these punchcards. They are ignored, their problems neglected. And they rape and rob and riot and kill because they're ignored and neglected.

They don't get the attention and care they so desperately need and want, so they unleash the terror of their frenzied frustrations on those they imagine responsible for their plight—be their victims innocent nurses and beauty parlor customers or American statesmen and Negro leaders or, justifiably, the establishment itself.

We weep and we moan and we say we are shocked and outraged and we ask what our country is coming to—and we get in our cars and drive down the freeway, past a traffic accident and around a ghetto, because we are afraid and we don't want to get involved.

Would Ted Kennedy want to be President of such a people? Like his brothers before him, he probably would. He would probably feel—may already feel—that he could help create an atmosphere in which such cruel indifference could no longer flourish. He may feel he could help create a society whose soil would reject the twisted roots of apathy and the befouled blossoms of death and tragedy they nourish.

But the American people—after their obligatory tears and expressions of sorrow over Robert Kennedy's death—will retreat into their shell of selfishness. They may elect a Reagan as President—a man who will relieve them of their terrible burden by telling them they are not responsible for the deaths and tragedies. But they will not elect another Kennedy. They will refuse to be drawn out of their shells, to be plunged again into grief.

They will not erect a living monument to their own guilt.